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Letter dated 17 April 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you a declaration of the eleventh Asia Cooperation Dialogue Ministerial Meeting (see annex), entitled "Towards economic growth, stability and prosperity in Asia through sustainable development". The meeting was held in Dushanbe on 29 March 2013.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 20.

(*Signed*) Sirodjidin M. **Aslov**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 17 April 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Dushanbe Declaration of the eleventh Asia Cooperation Dialogue Ministerial Meeting
29 March 2013

Towards economic growth, stability and prosperity in Asia through sustainable development

We, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and other Heads of delegations from Member States of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), namely, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Republic of Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, the State of Kuwait, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Sultanate of Oman, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of the Philippines, the State of Qatar, the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Singapore, the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Kingdom of Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam gathered in Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan, for the eleventh ACD Ministerial Meeting on 29 March 2013;

In view of the in-depth discussion on important regional and international issues, and review of the role of the ACD and the progress made since the first ACD Summit, as well as the challenges and opportunities lying ahead and directions to pace up progress in various areas, we declare the following:

1. We recognize that our region has maintained overall peace and stability in recent years and that countries in the region have generally chosen to adopt policies of good-neighbourliness, friendship, dialogue, cooperation and common development. Many economies in the region have been booming, and Asia has become a major driving force for global economic growth and an indispensable force on the global arena. We reaffirm the need to enhance unity, expand cultural exchanges and deepen pragmatic cooperation to promote common development and prosperity and contribute even more to peace, stability and development in the world;

2. We reaffirm the commitment to cooperate in developmental endeavours by building upon Asia's potentials and strengths through expanding the existing cooperative frameworks. We reiterate the special role of the ACD whereby Asian Leaders and Ministers convene to exchange views and promote cooperation in various areas of mutual interest while upholding the constructive values of the ACD, namely, positive thinking, informality, voluntarism, non-institutionalization, openness, respect for diversity, the level of support of Member States, the evolving nature of the ACD, positive work and participation of Member States in various cooperation programmes;

3. We acknowledge the significance of regional cooperation as an essential mechanism to accelerate realization of the three pillars of sustainable development, which incl le social development, economic development and environmental protection, as well as stability in the Asian region, with its vast and diverse natural and human resources, rich and historical heritage and economic and social potential;

4. We appreciate the steps made by the Prime and Co-Prime Movers to realize important initiatives and involve ACD Member States in their implementation, which would further strengthen the ACD as an effective mechanism for regional economic cooperation;

5. We recognize the grave threat posed by maritime piracy to regional and international trade and economic development, and reiterate our joint commitment to combating such piracy through meaningful international cooperation, based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. In this context, we note the United Arab Emirates' initiative to invite ACD Member States to participate in the third Global Conference on Combating Piracy, which will be hosted by the United Arab Emirates in the fourth quarter of 2013 in partnership between private and public sectors;

6. We express support to the position of the Human Rights Council as expressed in the resolution on religious intolerance, namely, the growing manifestation of intolerance based on religion or belief that can generate hatred and violence among individuals from and within different nations that may have serious implications at the national, regional and international levels and, in this regard, emphasizing the importance of respect for religious and cultural diversity, as well as inter-faith and intercultural dialogues aimed at promoting a culture of tolerance and respect among individuals, societies and nations. We commend all efforts in this regard, in particular the establishment of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICID) in Vienna;

7. We encourage ACD Member States to undertake common efforts for continued cooperation and consolidation in the area of sustainable development;

8. We realize that the population of the Asian region is a resource that can be harnessed by enhanced investments in health and education sectors and promoting rapid economic growth in order to provide productive employment for all. In order to deal with demographic change in a forward-looking way, we emphasize the need to systematically consider population trends and projections in our national, rural and urban development strategies and policies;

9. We are convinced that the international financial and economic crisis and the resulting downturn in global economic growth severely affect economies of Asian countries, inter alia, through decrease in trade and foreign direct investment and increased contractions and high costs of credit, thereby negatively impacting on the realization of the right to development, constraining social investment, deepening poverty and raising unemployment rates;

10. We recognize that the ACD region faces challenges to achieve poverty reduction and promotion of human development. We call for strengthening joint efforts to explore the possibility of setting up mechanisms for exchanges and cooperation in the region in order to promote poverty alleviation and create

conditions for sustainable development, and to address the issue of imbalances within the region;

11. We acknowledge that the ACD with its potential and pragmatic approaches should intensify its project-driven and project-orientated activities in various areas, including sustainable development, enhancing economic cooperation and promoting regional integration through vigorous intra-regional trade development, promotion of investment activity for bilateral and regional economic development, utilization and management of natural resources and exchange of technologies and information;

12. We realize that strengthening of partnerships and development of innovative sources of financing can play a role in complementing sources of financing for sustainable development. ACD Member States need significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources and effective use of financing in their efforts to promote sustainable development;

13. We recognize that it is imperative to achieve economic integration by various ways, inter alia, promoting free trade and investment and removing barriers to trade and investment among Asian countries. In this context, we invite ACD Member States to undertake initiatives to enhance the exchange of information, increase interaction among chambers and harmonize standards in relation to trade and investment;

14. We emphasize the need for ACD Member States to work together to meet challenges posed by climate change, enhance measures to promote climate change adaptation, improve natural disaster management, including disaster risk reduction, create conditions for mitigation of the effects of natural disasters and promote disaster risk reduction. We consider the establishment of the ACD Coordination Network among the early warning centres in the countries of the region to assist them in facing natural disasters as a necessary measure in providing humanitarian, financial and technological assistance to the affected countries. For this purpose, we propose that ACD Member States' experts on natural disasters meet in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, or any other country which is willing to host the meeting to discuss the establishment of the coordination network and make recommendations;

15. We see the need to take action at national, regional and international levels that aims to counter the effects of climate change, including dust and sandstorms, that negatively impact the whole world, in accordance with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

16. We call on ACD Member States to review the outcomes of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) with a target date of 2015, with a view towards understanding which goals have been achieved and which goals need to be addressed with focused solutions. We recognize that sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth in developing countries is a key requirement for eradicating poverty and hunger, and achieving the MDGs;

17. We note the global discussions on the post-2015 development agenda through various mechanisms and thematic consultations. We encourage ACD Member States in drafting the post-2015 development agenda in alignment with the sustainable development goals (SDGs) to be built on the MDGs and guided by a new development paradigm, which promotes human happiness and the well-being of

all life forms within a sustainable environment. We feel that inclusive growth and poverty eradication should be the main focus in the post-2015 development agenda;

18. We call upon ACD Member States to coordinate positions at international negotiations for developing a set of sustainable development goals as recommended in the outcome of the Rio+20 Conference. We reaffirm our belief that economic prosperity, social equity and environmental protection represent the key objectives in our pursuit of sustainable development;

19. We realize the necessity to ensure access of the people to health-care services, including to safe, affordable, effective and quality medicines, vaccines and medical technologies, and through strengthening health infrastructure and systems towards universal health coverage, as well as raising public awareness on environmental and sanitation issues. We call to intensify dialogues and joint efforts to build joint prevention and control mechanisms against cross-border pandemics and the spread of epidemics, for example, through the provision of medical assistance or using regional and international frameworks for cooperation in the health area and epidemic control;

20. We consider green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as one of the important tools available for achieving sustainable development. We support the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference on the green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. We call upon ACD Member States to accumulate positive experiences in adopting green economy policies in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication for the voluntary exchanges of best practices as well as capacity-building in the different areas of sustainable development;

21. We underscore food security and sufficient nutrition to be an important component of sustainable development. In view of the predominantly agricultural economy in many Asian countries, we call to intensify dialogue on agricultural policies and practical agricultural techniques and enhance regional cooperation in the area of food security and nutrition, support to the agricultural and rural development sectors, the transfer of technologies and the exchange of knowledge;

22. We call on all ACD Member States to be alert to the fact that efforts in areas such as alternative energy, without proper consideration of the food supply situation, may have unintended consequences on food security;

23. We recognize that water is at the core of sustainable development, as it is closely linked to a number of key global challenges. We, therefore, reiterate the critical importance of water and sanitation in sustainable development and reaffirm the commitments regarding the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation as well as the development of integrated water resource management, ensuring water recycling, capacity-building against drought, flooding, and disaster reduction, as well as rational and sustainable water use;

24. We highlight our commitment to the 2005-2015 International Decade for Action "Water for Life", and fully support Member States' efforts to realize the commitment, including through the mobilization of resources from all sources, capacity-building and technology transfer. We encourage participation of ACD Member States at the High-level International Conference on Water Cooperation, which will be held on 22 August 2013 in Dushanbe, in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution entitled "Implementation of the International

Year of Water Cooperation, 2013", and note the convening of the second Asia-Pacific Water Summit in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on 19 and 20 May 2013;

25. We reiterate that the ACD is aimed at enhancing energy security and sustainability in the region. We reaffirm support for the implementation of national policies and strategies, based on individual national circumstances and development aspirations. We call for enhanced support for national initiatives and activities aimed at utilization of renewable energy sources as well as cleaner and energy efficient technologies, and encourage ACD Member States to diversify and use appropriate energy mix to meet their respective development needs. We take note of the Energy Action Plan, express appreciation to the Prime and Co-Prime Movers for their work, and call for its adoption by the next ACD Ministerial Meeting in November 2013. We also welcome the offer of Tajikistan to convene the third ACD Energy Forum, the hosting of the International Exhibition "Expo-2017: Future Energy" in Astana by Kazakhstan and the hosting of a specialized workshop on renewable, clean and sustainable energy, in cooperation with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) in Abu Dhabi in the first quarter of 2014 in the context of Abu Dhabi Sustainable Week activities;

26. We commit ourselves to promote networking and strengthen cooperation by establishing partnership links between the ACD and other regional organizations and forums in various areas, including food, water and energy security, climate change, natural disasters, desertification, environmental and ecosystem preservation;

27. We take note of the draft Outline Concept Paper on ACD Regional Connectivity prepared by Thailand, which aims at building intra-regional linkages within the region and helps promote Asia's inclusive economic and social development by enhancing trade, investment, regional competitiveness and better understanding among peoples in Asia. We agree to consider its proposals further at the Working Group on Enhanced ACD Regional Connectivity to be convened by Thailand in June 2013;

28. We stress the importance of greater people-to-people contact for the promotion of peace, understanding and amity, which are vital for sustaining any outcome of our cooperation. In this regard, we call for increased exchange in culture, education and training among ACD Member States;

29. We encourage enhancement of participation and effective engagement of all governments, civil society, private sector and other relevant stakeholders to implement sustainable development and to take appropriate and effective measures to strengthen coordination and cooperation in order to integrate sustainable development into public and private investment, decision-making and the planning of humanitarian and development actions;

30. We endorse the results of the ACD Senior Officials' Meeting held in Kuwait on 3 and 4 March 2013, concerning the setting up of an ACD provisional secretariat. We appreciate Kuwait's offer to host and bear responsibilities for all necessary costs of the headquarters and personnel of the provisional secretariat until the next ACD Summit in Thailand in 2015;

31. We take note of the proposal by the State of Kuwait for the mobilization of US$ 2 billion for an Asian Development Fund and deeply appreciate Kuwait's pledge of US$ 300 million initial contribution. We call for experts to meet to discuss

the establishment and implementation of this proposal. Kuwait encourages other ACD Member States to make voluntary contributions to the fund;

32. While welcoming the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran in its capacity as Prime Mover in Cultural Cooperation, we call upon Member States to participate in the ACD Ministerial Meeting on Cultural Cooperation, which will be held in Tehran on 7 and 8 May 2013. Furthermore, we appreciate and welcome the holding of the first ACD Regional Seminar on Culture and Globalization in Asia, which was held in Tehran on 12 and 13 February 2013;

33. We take note of the ongoing, comprehensive national dialogue in Bahrain and welcome its generous offer to host the twelfth ACD Ministerial Meeting in Manama;

34. We also welcome the generous offers of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of the ACD in Riyadh and of Thailand to host the fourteenth Ministerial Meeting of the ACD and the second ACD Summit in 2015;

35. We express our appreciation to the Government of Tajikistan for the warm hospitality and the arrangements made for the eleventh ACD Ministerial Meeting.

Adopted in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 29 March 2013.